

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 22. (Canceled).

23. (Previously presented) The polypeptide of claim 24 comprising a *S.mutans* competence signal peptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

24. (Previously presented) An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 or SEQ ID NO:4 and having *S.mutans* competence signal peptide activity.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously presented) An isolated recombinant polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 4 which has *S.mutans* competence signal peptide activity.

27-41. (Canceled).

42. (Previously presented) A synthetic polypeptide having competence signal peptide activity and comprising the 21-amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:4.

43-44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently amended) An isolated ~~The polypeptide of claim 25 that is at least having greater than 60% identical sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 2, and having~~ has competence signal peptide activity ~~or having activity for inhibiting the competence signal activity of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2 or 4.~~

46. (Currently amended) The isolated polypeptide of claim 45 ~~having greater than that is at least~~ 90% ~~sequence identity~~ identical to SEQ ID NO: 2, and ~~having~~ has competence signal peptide activity ~~or having activity for inhibiting the competence signal activity of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2 or 4.~~

47-66. (Canceled)

67. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ An isolated polypeptide of claim 25 ~~having greater than that is at least~~ 60% ~~sequence identity~~ identical to SEQ ID NO: 4, and ~~having~~ has competence signal peptide activity ~~or having activity for inhibiting the competence signal activity of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2 or [[4]].~~

68. (Currently amended) The isolated polypeptide of claim 45 67 ~~having greater than that is at least~~ 90% ~~sequence identity~~ identical to SEQ ID NO: 4, and having competence signal peptide activity ~~or having activity for inhibiting the competence signal activity of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 2 or [[4]].~~